C

Core Performance Measures

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Synonyms

Job performance

Definition

Campbell (1990) defined performance as behaviors or actions that are relevant for the organization's goals and that can be measured in terms of the level of contribution to those goals. These behaviors can be distinguished from effectiveness, which is the impact that behaviors have on outcomes. He further considers performance of technical skills the core of the individual's job-specific task proficiency.

Description

When defining performance, one can consider a few assumptions underlying the performance concept (Motowidlo, Borman, & Schmit, 1997):

► Performance is a behavioral construct. We distinguish performance from the results of performance. The first is a set of behaviors that can have a positive or negative impact on organizational effectiveness, while the second are states that are changed by individual behavior. The results of performance are affected by factors beyond individual's control.

Performance behavior is episodic. During the course of a workday, individuals perform many discrete actions that can have different degrees of, either positive or negative, impact on organizational goal accomplishment. That is, some of the actions an individual executes at work have little or no influence at all in organizational effectiveness. Those behaviors do not belong to the performance domain. ► Job performance is defined only by the discrete behavioral episodes that make a measurable contribution to goal achievement. Thus, it is possible to single out behavioral episodes that are deemed to be more or less organizationally desirable and to scale the degree to which they are desirable.

Performance is multidimensional. Although a person's overall job performance can be considered as his or her unique contribution to goal accomplishment, there are a multitude of behaviors that help accomplish or detract from organizational goals. Thus, the performance domain is best measured and predicted if organized domain into homogeneous categories and aggregate contribution values of behavioral episodes separately in each category.

The Campbell model was one of the first frameworks to understand individual performance at work and became a very influential one (Campbell, 1999). This model organizes performance into eight components: (1) job-specific

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task proficiency, (2) non-job-specific task proficiency, (3) written and oral communication proficiency, (4) demonstration of effort, (5) maintenance of personal discipline, (6) facilitation of peer and ▶ team performance, (7) supervision/ ▶ leadership, and (8) management/administration. Each of these factors in turn comprises a number of subfactors which may vary between different jobs. Campbell describes the performance components as a function of three direct determinants which are declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge and skills, and motivation. These three determinants are predicted by indirect determinants that include ability, personality, interests, education, training and experience, and aptitude-treatment interactions.

Borman and Motowidlo (1993) made a distinction between two types of behaviors that can contribute to organizational goal accomplishment. They called them task performance and ▶ contextual performance.

Task performance refers to the proficiency with which workers exhibit activities that contribute to organizational objectives through the technical core. In a broad sense, two types of task performance can be identified. One type consists of activities that directly transform raw materials into the goods and services that the organization produces. Examples are operating a machine in a factory plant, attending a costumer in a restaurant, teaching in a school, and counting money in a bank. The other type consists of activities that service and maintain the technical core by replenishing its supply of raw materials; distributing its finished products; and providing important planning, coordination, supervising, and staff functions that enable it to function effectively and efficiently.

Contextual performance contributes to organizational goals by supporting the social, organizational, and psychological context in which the technical core must function. Activities such as helping coworkers, following rules, putting extra effort, endorsing organizational objectives, and volunteering can be considered contextual performance because they help build and maintain the social network and enhance the psychological safety climate in which the technical core is embedded. Within this type of performance, one can differentiate between behaviors which aim primarily at the undisturbed functioning of the organization as it is at the present moment and proactive behaviors which aim at changing and improving work procedures and organizational processes (Frese & Sonnentag, 2001).

In their taxonomy of core performance, Borman and Motowildo (1993) proposed five components of contextual performance. The components are (a) volunteering to carry out task activities that are not formally part of the job; (b) persisting with ▶ enthusiasm and extra effort when necessary to complete own task activities successfully; (c) helping and cooperating with others; (d) following organizational rules and procedures even when it is personally inconvenient; and (e) endorsing, supporting, and defending organizational objectives. This behavioral components of contextual performance share conceptual similarities with other models of organizational behavior that include ▶ prosocial organizational behavior (Brief & Motowildo, 1986), organizational ▶ citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988), the soldier effectiveness model (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997), organizational spontaneity (George & Brief, 1992), the multifactor performance model (Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, & Sager, 1993), personal initiative (Frese, Fay, Hilburger, Leng, & Tag, 1997), and voice (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

Although inseparable components of the core performance concept, task, and contextual performance appear to differ in at least three features (Motowidlo & Schmit, 1999): (1) Activities relevant for task performance vary from one job to another, whereas contextual performance activities are relatively similar across jobs; (2) task performance is more related to individual ▶ ability, while contextual performance is more related to individual differences in ▶ personality and ▶ motivation; and (3) task performance is more prescribed and constitutes in-role behavior, whereas contextual performance is more discretionary and extra role.

Performance can be measured in terms of an individual's actions or the consequences of those

actions. The latest uses results-based measures such as number of pieces assembled, cars sold, and reports produced. These are often called objective measures and are less subject to assessment biases and therefore produce higher interrater reliability. Measuring performance in terms of action is more consistent with the definition of performance itself and has several advantages. First, they can be used for any type of job, making it easier to compare different jobs in the same organization. Second, they can be used in jobs where it is not easy or possible to obtain objective measures. Third, they allow the raters to account for situational factors that influence performance results. Fourth, they somehow prevent that employees focus only on task proficiency and disregard contextual performance or use undesirable means to accomplish results. On the other side, behavior-based measures show lower ▶ interrater reliability, making the comparison between different employees more inaccurate (Rynes, Gerhart, & Parks, 2005). One way to improve the accuracy of performance ratings based on behavior is to use multisource or 360° performance evaluation. In addition, multisource feedback seems to be more adequate in team-based organizations because it accounts better for ▶ task complexity but also because feedback is perceived by incumbents as more fair.

Behaviorally anchored rating scales (BARS), introduced by Smith and Kendall in 1963, established the standard for performance measurement formats. The idea that supported these formats was that behavioral anchors would help raters make more objective evaluations. BARS place behavioral statements (anchors) at different places on the scale according to their effectiveness levels. Additional related behavior-based formats were introduced, namely, behavior observation scales, with favorably worded behavioral statements that required the rater to judge the frequency with which each behavior was exhibited (Latham & Wexley, 1981). The mixed standard scale (MSS) that had an effective, mid-level, and ineffective behavioral statement representing each dimension (Blanz & Giselli, 1972). One close variant of BARS was the behavior summary scale (BSS) (Borman, 1979) which had more general anchors at each of three or four effectiveness levels instead of specific anchors for each level (For a more detailed review, see Borman et al., 2001). Despite the limitations, behaviorally anchored scales remain the most practical instrument to measure performance in work contexts.

The remarkable changes that organizations and work are undergoing have implications for conceptualizing and understanding performance. The importance of continuous learning, the relevance of proactivity, increase in teamwork, globalization, and technology draw new ways to define and measure individual performance (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002).

One model of performance that accounts for the changing nature of work was proposed by Griffin and colleagues (2007). In this model the authors depict a model of positive ▶ work role behaviors that capture the full scope of behaviors that contribute to effectiveness in highly interdependent organizations that operate in highly uncertain environments, specially adaptive and proactive behaviors. The model describes three components of performance – proficiency, adaptivity, and proactivity – that can be enacted differently at the individual, team, and organizational levels. The cross classification of the three types of behavior with the three levels generates nine specific dimensions of work role performance: (1) individual task proficiency, (2) individual task ▶ adaptivity, (3) individual task proactivity, (4) team member proficiency, (5) team member adaptivity, (6) team member proactivity, (7) organization member proficiency, (8) organization member adaptivity, and (9) organization member proactivity. The model also postulates that personal and situational variables predict these behaviors. Hence, role breadth ▶ self-efficacy is related to proactive behaviors, and ▶ openness to change is related to adaptivity at the three levels. On the situation side, ▶ organizational commitment predicts the three types of behaviors at the organizational level, while team support predicts team-oriented behaviors. Finally, role clarity is associated with

individual task proficiency. These assumptions received empirical support (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007). More recently, support has also been found to the positive influence of ▶ leader vision on adaptivity and proactivity for employees who were high in openness to work role change and role breadth self-efficacy (Griffin & Mason, 2010).

Cross-References

- ▶ Ability
- ▶ Adaptivity
- ▶ Citizenship Behavior
- ▶ Contextual
- ▶ Enthusiasm
- ▶ Interrater Reliability
- ▶ Job
- ▶ Leader Vision
- ▶ Leadership
- ▶ Motivation
- ▶ Openness to Change
- ▶ Organizational Commitment
- ▶ Personality
- ▶ Prosocial Organizational Behavior
- ▶ Self-efficacy
- ▶ Task Complexity
- ▶ Team Performance
- ▶ Work Role

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